



2024 – 2025 Slopestyle / Big Air HPP Team Selection Criteria

October 26th, 2023

< v2. April 21, 2024: Updated Appendix – Placing Value Charts to reflect agreement with PSO leads in April 2023 >

1. Purpose

This document defines the procedures used by Freestyle Canada to:

- Select athletes to the National Team Slopestyle / Big Air Programs: both World Cup and NextGen teams.
- Generate the High Performance Slopestyle and Big Air Program Athlete Ranking List

2. Document Scope

The information in this document relates to selection of the 2024-25 HPP Slopestyle / Big Air National Team programs; other documents which are separate that affect skiers in the HPP program and include:

- Freestyle Canada High Performance Athlete funding allocation
- World Cup Quota and Allocation Criteria
- World Championships Quota Allocation System
- World Championships Selection Criteria
- Olympic Winter Games Internal Nomination Procedures

Independent events (X-Games, Dew Tour) are independent of FIS and manage their own athlete invitation processes to which Freestyle Canada is not a party.

All Freestyle Canada criteria can be found on the Freestyle Canada website under National Team policies: <https://freestylecanada.ski/policies/national-team-policies/>

3. Freestyle Canada's High Performance Program Goal

Freestyle Canada's High Performance Program Mission: To develop athletes in a safe and ethical manner, who win medals at the Olympic Winter Games, the FIS World Championships and X-Games.

Freestyle Canada's high-performance staff will support, prepare, and assist identified athletes in achieving their goals through a variety of mechanisms including:

- Ongoing gap analysis which will identify each athlete's strengths and areas where improvement is needed to prescribe appropriate technical, physical, and mental training programs.
- Assistance in defining and choosing appropriate lifestyle choices as they relate to high performance training and competition.
- Gaining competitive experience on the international stage where they can hone their tactical and psychological skills.

4. Definitions and Acronyms

Title	Acronym	Role
High Performance Program	HPP	Performance stream within Freestyle Canada
Gold Medal Profile	GMP	"Gold Medal Profile" Identified skills for skiers at various levels of the LTAD
Long-Term Athlete Development	LTAD	Pathway for development of freestyle skiers from grass roots through sport for life

NextGen	NG	Athletes showing evidence of medal potential for the subsequent Olympic Winter Games (up to 7 years ahead)
NextGen Prospect		An athlete who is provisionally named to the NextGen training group but must meet benchmarks by October 1 of the season to confirm their place on the NextGen Team.
Sport Science Sport Medicine and Innovation	SSSMI	Category of performance services for medical, paramedical, and applied research aimed at enhancing athlete performance
Own the Podium	OTP	Technical agency who makes recommendations to Sport Canada on the funding for all Canadian sports.
Slopestyle, Big Air	SS, BA	Acronyms for the individual disciplines
Tier 1 & 2, Boosted, Neutral or Diminished Events		See Appendix 1 for explanation
“Good Standing”		Athletes who have signed their athlete agreements, hold an active FIS license, and have made appropriate arrangements to settle any outstanding debts with FC’s finance department.
Point Value		All competitions are valued based on their Tier and Rating. Point Value is a score/number pulled from a value table that reflects an athlete’s placing in a specific competition. Please see Appendix 1 for full explanation.
Major Games		The Olympic Winter Games (OWG) and the FIS World Ski Championships (WCh) are considered « Major Games »
Independent events		Private events that run independent of the FIS including the X-Games, Dew Tour, etc.

5. Selection Authority

The selection of athletes to the Freestyle Canada’s High Performance Program is the responsibility of the CEO, acting on the recommendations of the SS/BA High Performance Committee (the “HP Committee”). All team selections are for a one-year period; the national team will usually be named by May 15th each year.

The High-Performance Program Director coordinates all calculations related to HPP rankings. These calculations are presented to the HP Committee to inform their decision-making process. In addition to competition results, HPP coaches will report on each athlete’s skill level, overall progression, and commitment to training over the past twelve months: this will all impact selection to the team.

5.1 HPP SS/BA HP Committee

Under the authority of the CEO, the HP Committee is responsible for all team selections.

5.1.1 HP Committee Composition:

- Three voting members:
 - World Cup Team Lead Coach
 - NextGen Head Coach

- High Performance Director (Chair)
- Non-voting members:
 - Other national slopestyle / big air program coaches
 - Sport Science Sport Medicine and Innovation Director
 - Sport Development Director
 - CEO

When required, the HP Committee will seek input from content experts, such as the HPP Manager, mental training consultants, strength and conditioning trainers, medical team members or others. HP Committee members will follow Freestyle Canada's Conflict of Interest guidelines and will abstain from participating in discussions regarding matters that directly affect members of their immediate families. Meetings of the HP Committee shall be open to members of the committee and invited experts only.

5.1.2 HP Committee Decision Communication

A HPP staff member will notify selected athletes about selection decisions. Generally, this communication will be made to directly affected parties by phone and followed in writing (usually, by e-mail). A summary of the decisions of the HP Committee meetings shall be available to interested parties on request.

6. National Team Structure

Freestyle Canada strives to provide gender equity by providing equal selection opportunity for men and women to the High Performance Program; factors affecting the organization's ability to achieve this are FIS quota available, athlete skill levels, athlete pool, etc.

6.1 National Team Size

Annually, Freestyle Canada will determine the size of the National Team. In any year, Freestyle Canada may modify the historic team structure / size to impact quality programming aimed towards achievement of program goals and Freestyle Canada's high performance mission. Group / Team sizes are influenced by Freestyle Canada's Major Games strategy, FIS Quotas, FIS rules, timing in the quadrennial, the depth / skill level of the current athlete pool, available resources, and ranking point spread.

6.2 National Team Groups

OTP provides funding in two restricted and prioritized funding envelopes to Freestyle Canada:

1. Enhanced Excellence (World Cup Team): To support athletes who have shown evidence they are on track to medal, podium potential, at the upcoming Olympic Winter Games, World Championships and X-Games
2. NextGen: For the program that supports athletes who are showing evidence they are on track to medal at the subsequent Olympic Winter Games

Each year, athletes are nominated to a specific group based on evidence of their performance capabilities and potential. World Cup Team and Next Gen Team performance requirement are outlined in section in Sections 8 and 9.

- World Cup Team: World Cup Team athletes are usually targeted for entry into Tier 1 events (major and World Cup events); each WC Team athlete has proven his or her eligibility to receive the highest level of Freestyle Canada High Performance Athlete funding, core program support and may be eligible for Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program (AAP). These athletes should be able to consistently achieve podium performances at major events and on the FIS World Cup circuit.

In addition to results, World Cup Team performance considerations include other indicators of an athlete's skill level and projected potential: or recent regression. The framework of the performance considerations is guided by Freestyle Canada's Gold Medal Profile guidelines (GMP) which include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- **Fitness:** Athletes must be able to remain safe and healthy while performing difficult and necessary skills. Appropriate fitness levels are measured regularly throughout the year by the Freestyle Canada IST staff.
 - **Skill Assessment:** The disciplines of Slopestyle and Big Air quickly evolves, and athletes can achieve exponential skill development that may not have been performed in competition yet. An athlete who is tracking towards identified targets, has a strong work ethic and a commitment to training opportunities may move ahead of an athlete who has not demonstrated these traits when the skill set is between them is close.
 - **Major event eligibility (Olympic Winter Games and World Championships):** Selection parameters may give WC spot allocation priority to a highly ranked athlete to allow them the opportunity for selection.
 - **Challenges:** An athlete not progressing towards GMP goals may not be re-selected to the team in subsequent years.
- NextGen Team: This program that supports athletes who have demonstrated that they are on track to win a medal at the subsequent Olympic Winter Games. NextGen Team athletes are given priority for entry into NorAm competitions. They are eligible for entry into Tier 1 events but there is no guarantee. NextGen athletes may be eligible for Freestyle Canada High Performance Athlete funding and will benefit from enhanced core program funding and possibly the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) should there be enough funding. NextGen athletes should be able to consistently achieve podium performances at FIS NorAm events and be in the top 2/3rds of the FIS World Cup circuit. Selection is based on a combination of Competition Benchmarks, HPP Rankings and the performance consideration of skills (see Section 8 and 9).
 - NextGen Prospects: A third group of athletes, "NextGen prospects", may be identified by the HP Committee. These identified athletes may be provided opportunities to train with the NG program. On or after October 1st, NextGen prospects who have performed well (improved through training and coaching) during the training season will be assessed on their current skill inventory / proficiency and may be offered a place on the Next Gen Team.

7. Major Games Selection Consideration

During an Olympic Winter Games or FIS World Championship qualification period, athletes who have a reasonable chance at selection may be given priority in the allocation of WC opportunities. Major Games selection criteria will be developed in a separate policy and posted on the Freestyle Canada website.

8. Selection Eligibility

To be eligible for selection to the National Slopestyle / Big Air program, an athlete needs to meet both general and performance eligibility criteria.

8.1 General Eligibility

An athlete must be a Freestyle Canada member in good standing and:

- be able to obtain a Canadian passport and
- be an active FIS member and
- If requested by Freestyle Canada, agree to be subject to any proceedings taken under the UCCMS, including, without limitation, signing a UCCMS Participant consent form and accepting the jurisdiction of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner / Abuse-Free Sport.

8.2 Performance Eligibility

World Cup Team (in Slopestyle and/or Big Air):

- Men: Two top 16 results, achieved in (Neutral or Boosted) Tier 1 events.
- Women: Two top 10 results achieved in Tier 1 events

NextGen Team (in Slopestyle and/or Big Air):

- Men: ranked top-3 on the FIS NorAm Overall event specific year-end ranking or,
- Women: ranked first on the FIS NorAm Overall event specific year-end ranking or,
- Either Gender:
 - Win the current year Canada Cup title or,
 - FIS Junior World Champion.

Note: The performance caliber of the international competition field fluctuates from year-to-year; to make a team with an adequate number of training partners, the HP Committee may adjust the above benchmarks should too many or too few athletes achieve them.

9. HPP Slopestyle / Big Air Selection Process

9.1 Sequence of Team Selections

Three groups of athletes are identified to the High Performance Program:

- the World Cup team members are selected first.
- the NextGen team members are selected second.
- Any NextGen prospects may be identified third.

9.2 Timelines

Timeframe	Activity
Within 30 days of the last eligible event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible athletes are identified.• The HPP SS/BA Rankings are audited/reviewed for accuracy and anomalies are investigated.• The HP Committee determines if there are any performing / progressing athletes not included above and added to the nomination list for consideration.
May 15 th (each year)	Usual Team Selection date. Nominated athletes will be notified by phone and/or e-mail.
Within 10 days of notification	Nominated athletes will have 10 days from initial notification to accept their position on the team.

9.3 Generation of Nominations to the Teams

The Freestyle Canada Slopestyle and Big Air Team is generally selected based on the following steps from the pool of identified athletes (Section 8):

Step 1: HPP Ranking

HPP Rankings of eligible athletes are provided to the HP Committee as a starting point for consideration and put onto a “Nomination List”; there will be separate nomination lists for each of Men/Women for the WC and NG teams. Details of the HPP SS/BA Ranking process are provided in Appendix 1. The HPP rankings serve to identify individual competitive readiness and provides one perspective of podium potential.

Step 2: Additional Athletes Considered

The HP Committee determines if there are any performing / progressing athletes who were not included in the ranking of eligible athletes and adds to the nomination list for consideration. All athletes added to the nomination list who were not eligible or not ranked will have skill assessments¹ conducted by the coaching staff.

Step 3: Additional Skill Assessments¹

The national team coaching staff keeps an ongoing record of skill progression for each athlete in the program. The coaching staff:

- Will perform detailed skill assessments on any athlete who may be affected by an out of ranking order nomination. These skill assessments may be used to compare athlete progression in a head-to-head manner to assess the nomination order in Step 4.
- May perform detailed skill assessments on any athlete who falls into consideration as an Exceptional Circumstance (see Section 10)
- May perform detailed skill assessments on any athlete who is deemed to be in question of achieving their performance / skill progression targets or who have a poor, unexcused attendance record at camps. This assessment

¹ See Appendix 3 for Skill Assessment form.

will determine if continued investment by Freestyle Canada can be justified and if their continued participation is warranted.

Step 4: Generation of Nomination List

The nomination list of ranked and assessed skiers will be considered for each Gender and level of team. The HP Committee will make their final recommendations to the CEO on the team composition for the next training and competitive season. The nominations will take into consideration factors such as: individual performance trends (skill and result), compliance to the agreed upon plans, progression towards the GMP (skills, physical, etc.).

It is possible for the HP Committee to make an out of ranking order nomination. This can be done when there is a narrow point spread between athletes or due to other circumstances² described in Section 10. The decision to make an out of rank order nomination for selection is never taken lightly. In the unusual instance that an athlete is selected out of rank order, the circumstances surrounding and the reasons for the decision must be documented and reviewed by the CEO before ratification.

10. Exceptional Circumstance

An athlete who is progressing in their career but has a setback due to an injury, a death in the family or similar life or psychological experiences could be afforded additional flexibility for HPP Slopestyle / Big Air Rankings, National Team Selection, and other Freestyle Canada decisions; these situations are referred to as “Exceptional Circumstances”. These situations need to be supported by a note from a FC recognized medical provider and/or the HP Committee.

If during the current season, an athlete has missed the following number of starts due to Exceptional Circumstance:	Then the athlete may use up to the following from the previous season:
Entire season	Selection period will be extended backwards to a maximum of one full FIS season. The athlete’s top 3 placing point values will be taken from the previous year and entered the current year’s HPP Rankings to be considered for selections.

²Individual Performance Plan (IPP) will be considered to determine if the ranking is a true picture of podium and performance potential. In some stages of development an athlete may focus on training and not perform as well at competition to target major events or achieve a certain competitive skill for long term success. Any weak information, or skewed data, with provided evidence, in this process will not be considered a true indication of peak performance.

<p>Partial season missed, (missed between 2 and 5 starts)</p>	<p>Considered events will be taken from the previous season. The same period as that athletes' injury exists in the current season will be used in the previous season, to a maximum of one season. Events considered will be the same number and level of events missed.</p> <p>Example: if an athlete was injured during the period of January 5th to March 30th in the current season and missed two Tier 1 boosted events, FC staff will go back and select the athlete's best two Tier 1 boosted events within January 5th – March 30th from the previous season.</p>
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1. Only athletes who are members of the HPP program are eligible to use the "Exceptional Circumstance" clause. Provincial athletes who have suffered injury may be brought into the HPP through the mechanism of an "out of order" selection should sufficient evidence be available to justify.
2. The HP Committee has the discretion to use the Exceptional Circumstance clause for special cases. This is more likely for athletes with a proven contending skills or WC results (medals or skills in WC finals, at major games or X-Games). This may include expanding the backwards extension of the selection period, or other adjustments to meet the special case.
3. Any health curtailment must be evaluated and validated by a FC medical staff member. The purpose of the medical assessment is to confirm the degree of the athlete's curtailment and the anticipated time of the athlete's recovery.
4. The HP Committee, with input from medical experts, may prevent an athlete from entering an event if the pace of the athlete's rehabilitation from injury warrants doing so and further injury could result.

It may occur that it is inappropriate for a High-Performance Program athlete, by reason of a health-related curtailment of activities, to participate in HPP training and competition activities for an entire program year. In such a situation, the following shall apply:

- Any such determination shall be made collectively by the athlete, the athlete's personal physician, the Freestyle Canada HPD, and FC's Chief Medical Officer.
- The athlete shall remain a member of the High-Performance Program and shall purchase a FC membership and an International Competitor's License which is part of their team fee.
- The athlete shall remain eligible for HPP clothing and other supplier pool goods, shall continue to be promoted in FC Media activities, and shall continue to be eligible for Sport Canada carding and Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN) services until financial support is depleted.
- A rehabilitation program for the athlete shall be developed jointly, by the athlete and the FC. The rehabilitation program shall be monitored by the FC and evaluated on a regular basis. The athlete's return to full HPP participation shall be, in part, dependent on satisfactory completion of the rehabilitation program.
- The rehabilitation program may include formal HPP training and entry into competitions, as well as physiotherapy, individual training, and other

rehabilitative measures. Any formal HPP training or entry into competitions shall be for rehabilitative purposes only. Evaluations or results from such training or entry into competitions shall not be used for the ranking of the athlete for HPP Team selections.

- The athlete shall be eligible to return to full HPP participation only after the FC determines that the rehabilitation program has been successfully completed.

11. General

Issues not otherwise covered by this document are subject to the decision of the Chief Executive Officer of FC, in consultation with the HP Committee.

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12. Appeal and Hearing Process

Freestyle Canada is bound by the mandate of our organization and our performance partners; every attempt is made to make decisions that are in line with those parameters. If an athlete feels a decision was incorrect, he or she may submit an appeal.

The purpose of an appeal is to correct any missing or incorrect information or correct any procedures that were not properly followed by the HP Committee or HPP staff. Appeals must be conducted in accordance with the Appeal Policy established by the FC. Policy can be found on www.freestylecanada.ski

Appendix 1 – Calculation of Slopestyle / Big Air HPP Rankings

The High- Performance Director will coordinate and maintain all HPP Slopestyle / Big Air Rankings and calculations related to the selection of HPP teams.

- For an athlete to be ranked, they must have competed in at least three different FC eligible competitions during the season just completed (unless Exceptional Circumstances apply).
- HPP Rankings will be based on performances from the season just completed.
- Result Anomalies: In some circumstances there are three to four competitive qualifying events on the same course within a short period of time, often with the same panel of judges. Circumstances such as these can skew rankings (positively or negatively). Scenarios such as these will be reviewed by the HP Committee and may warrant out of order selections.

Point Values are determined from the final placing an athlete receives in a recognized competition. All competitions are factored based on the Tier and Value – please see Appendix 2 for a sample Points Value Table.

The sum of three best point values, obtained within the selection period, will be calculated:

Team	Combination of Results for HPP Ranking Calculation
World Cup	The sum of each athlete's three best Point Values will be used to calculate each his or her HPP Ranking. For Team selections, a maximum of two athletes per gender can be selected using only Big Air Points (i.e., counting three Big Air Point Values).
NextGen	The sum of each athlete's three best Point Values will be used to calculate their HPP Ranking using a maximum of two Big Air Point Values.

Eligible events and placing values are categorized in three different tiers as described below.

Identifying & valuing the rating of events:

COMPONENT	DETAILS
ESTABLISHING THE HPP TIER (based on the level of the event):	
TIER 1	FIS World Cups and Major Events / Identified independent events
TIER 2	FIS NorAms and identified Independent
TIER 3	Canada Cup and identified independent events
VALUE OF THE TIERS	Tier 1 is the highest valued events, then Tier 2. Tier 2 is valued more than Tier 3
	Each Tier can be given more detailed value: "Neutral, "Boosted" or "Diminished" based on the below guidelines
	There are 5 values within a tier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosted: + 15 & +7.5 or • Neutral or • Diminished -7.5, & -15
PLACING VALUES	The placing values are established by the Tier and then if it is Neutral, Diminished or Boosted.
	Have a diminishing value from 1st place to last place in the event.
	There is an "R-Value" for each Tier which is the rate of diminishing value for each placing, and it is relative to the value and tier of the event. Please see Appendix 2.
ESTABLISHING EVENT VALUES	All of the below is taken into consideration when determining the value of events
COURSE DETAILS	Quality of course overall; features, layout, or flow of course, quality of jumps or Pipe - wall & transition
JUDGING	Quality judging throughout the heats within the phases, accurate scores, and placings at the end of the event
CALIBRE OF FIELD	SKILLS: overall level and quality of skills performed in the top 10 for Women, Top 20 for Men
	COMPETITORS: did the top skiers participate? Countries attending, Current FIS rankings are referred to
	NOTE: FIS rankings can change week to week and so establishing the value will fluctuate based on the current FIS rankings
	Injured top athletes not present will also be taken into consideration
COURSE CONDITIONS	weather delays, snow conditions, wind, maintenance of venue
FIELD SIZE	total field size without DNS, # of countries
EVENT FORMAT	was the format conducive to a quality event?
	Were the heats fairly designed: size / good distribution of calibre of athletes
	# of heats in each phase
	# of runs within each heat

Ranking Criteria Notes:

- Event values will be established after the event is complete to ensure accurate values are used for final rankings
- Values of events can be changed throughout the season. This would be done to ensure the events are fairly valued comparatively with all events throughout the season
- The HP Committee reserves the right to determine that an event will not be recognized for ranking or selection purposes up to two weeks prior to the first training day.
- Within two weeks after completion, an event will be valued and may be shifted into a different tier to accurately value the event.
- Value of events are determined as follows:
 - HP Slopestyle coaching staff will determine the value of the Tier 1 and 2 events.
 - The HPAD advisory group, guided by provincial coaches, will value the Tier 3 events.
 - These committees may decide to add eligible events with a minimum of 3-weeks' notice prior to the first competition day of that event.

Appendix 3:

The following chart is the framework in which we will assess athletes when needed. The information in the “Skills achieved” and “Score” are examples of how components are assessed.

SS / BA SKILL ASSESSMENT		
COMPONENT	SKILLS ACHIEVED	SCORE 1-4
CREATIVITY Variety of tricks & grabs / flow through course / style	<i>good variety / not enough speed / no style</i>	1
JUMP DD Rotations / flips	<i>sw dub 12, dub 10, 2 dir 10</i>	2
RAIL SKILLS Combinations, DD of rotations, variety of directions	<i>3 diff combos / 3 4s / 2 dir on, 2 dir off</i>	3
OVERALL POTENTIAL # of years in sport / T2C foundation skills / age compared to OWG cycle & current pool of athletes / attitude – commitment / Physical condition / Mental readiness	<i>great attitude / 22yrs - skills not developed to next 2 OWG cycles compared to current pool / 5 years in sport</i>	1
	TOTAL SCORE	7

SCALE GUIDE: Relative to the World Cup Circuit and the current pool of CDN athletes for selection	
Not competition ready	1
Doing in competition but not top 50% of field quality	2
Finals round quality	3
Top 5 quality	4

* Benchmark skills are outlined in Freestyle Canada’s Gold Medal Profile (GMP) Guidelines. The GMP is used as a guideline, with the rate of skill progression in the NorAm and World Cup circuit, the base for comparison may change to stay current with the performance needs in team selection.